

MISSOURI VETERANS COMMISSION



Annual Report

Fiscal Year 1994

July 1, 1993 - June 30, 1994

STATE OF MISSOURI

Mel Carnahan
Governor

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY

Terry Knowles
Director

MISSOURI VETERANS COMMISSION

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Executive Director

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Member

Carl H. Niewoehner
Member

The Missouri Veterans Commission's Annual Report is published by the Commission and provided without charge. Commission

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Director's Comments



The Missouri Veterans Commission's priorities during FY 1994 were to increase Veterans Service Officer staff and Central Office/Homes management staff. Not only did the General Assembly agree with us by funding these priorities, but it also provided requested construction appropriations for a new veterans home at Cameron and \$25,000 to begin planning for a veterans home at Warrensburg.

As we move into FY 1995, there are new areas of concern to address. Even with the addition of four new Service Officers, the Commission still lacks the capability to appropriately train and communicate service data with VSO's and veterans organizations around the state. One priority this year will be to provide the training and information distribution modalities necessary to meet the challenges of the future. The other area of primary concern this year is our ability to provide adequate beds at existing veterans homes for those veteran applicants in the very heavy care category. Our waiting lists for admission to veterans homes are heavily weighted with persons requiring intensive levels of nursing care. Current staffing levels only allow for approximately 37% of beds at any facility to house the most severely disabled.

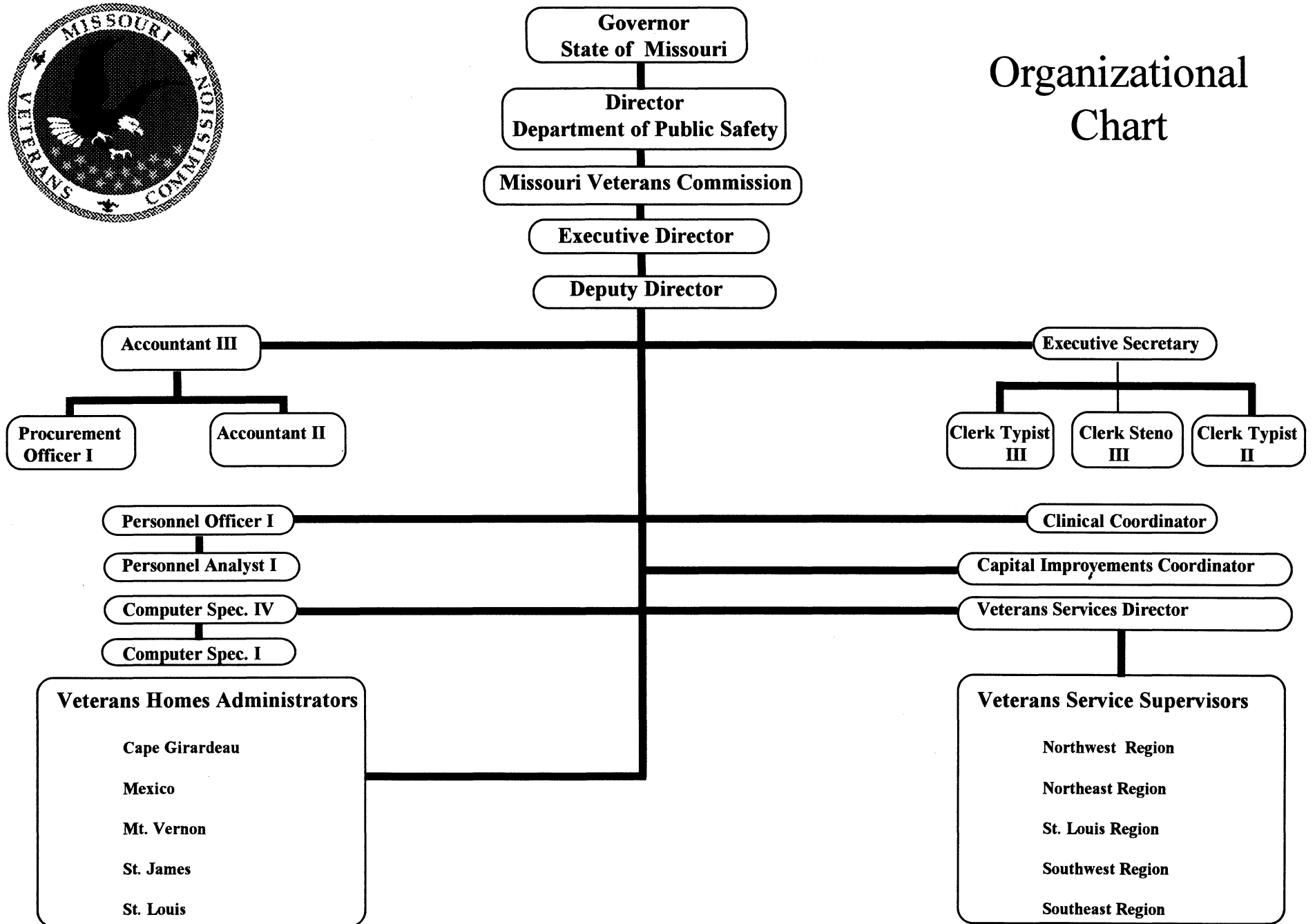
Our efforts this year must concentrate on increasing the staffing at all veterans homes, so that the percentage of heavy care availability will be improved significantly.

Additionally, the Commission will critically evaluate state and national healthcare reform initiatives, with particular attention to roles the Commission might play, to better serve Missouri's veterans and dependents.

Robert R. Buckner



Organizational Chart





MISSION STATEMENT

The Missouri Veterans Commission was established on August 28, 1989, and Chapter 42, RSMo. (Supplemental, 1989) governs its operation as a state agency. The Commission is vested with the responsibility to provide the Veterans of Missouri with programs and services funded by the state and federal governments as well as private and corporate contributions.

The Commission is composed of five veterans appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The Commission directs all state efforts to provide for the needs of veterans, their dependents and survivors. These needs are met through two major programs: Service to Veterans and the Missouri Veterans Homes. The Commission appoints an Executive Director who implements policies and is responsible for the state-wide management of veterans programs.

The Service to Veterans program provides essential services to the veterans of the state. Acting as the veterans' representative, the Veterans Service Officers and their staffs provide counseling and assistance by presenting and prosecuting claims on behalf of the veterans and their dependents or survivors. These claims may include compensation; education, pensions insurance, hospitalization and rehabilitation. Services also include assistance for the veterans in any matter which requires coordination and cooperation with local, state and federal agencies.

The Missouri Veterans Homes provide the highest possible level of quality nursing care to Missouri's veterans. Their objective is to rehabilitate to the maximum attainable level of independent functioning by utilizing all necessary governmental and community services and therapies, and to provide a comfortable, safe, sanitary environment conducive to personal happiness. A further goal is to make available for residents social and cultural activities of personal interest designed to foster feelings of dignity and self-respect.

The Commission also provides direction for the Veterans Trust Fund. This is a means whereby Missourians can financially contribute to the Commission, so it can continue to provide quality programs and services to the veterans of the state.

The Missouri Veterans Commission represents all Missouri veterans and is charged with meeting the needs and defending the entitlements of those who have served their country with honor and distinction.



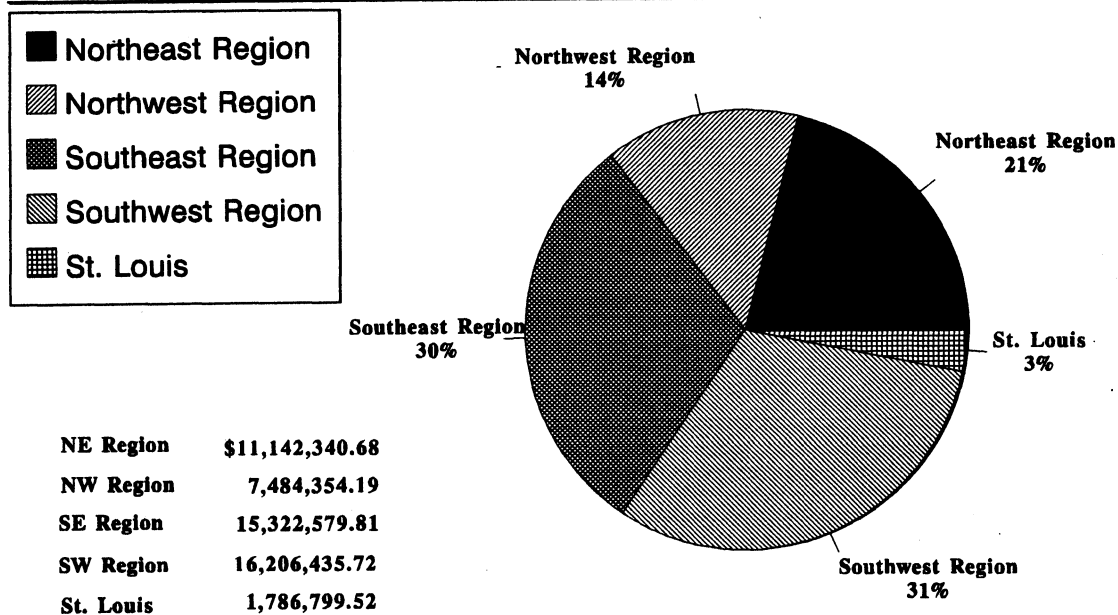
SERVICE TO VETERANS PROGRAM

Through this program, the Commission provides a statewide network of Service Officers and Assistants. These Service Officers and Service Assistants counsel and assist veterans in filing claims for benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs. All residents who have had qualifying military service, their dependents and survivors, are eligible for assistance. The Service to Veterans staff works in cooperation with veterans service organizations to serve the veterans of the state of Missouri. In Fiscal Year 1994, the thirty-nine Service Officers, Supervisors, and Assistants were directly responsible for obtaining \$51,942,510 in federal benefits for veterans, their dependents and survivors. (See following chart of Veterans Benefits Awarded FY '94.)

In addition to the services provided by the Service Officers, in January 1994, an outreach program was begun at the Missouri Hotel in Springfield, to bring services to homeless veterans. An expansion of this program to other areas is planned.

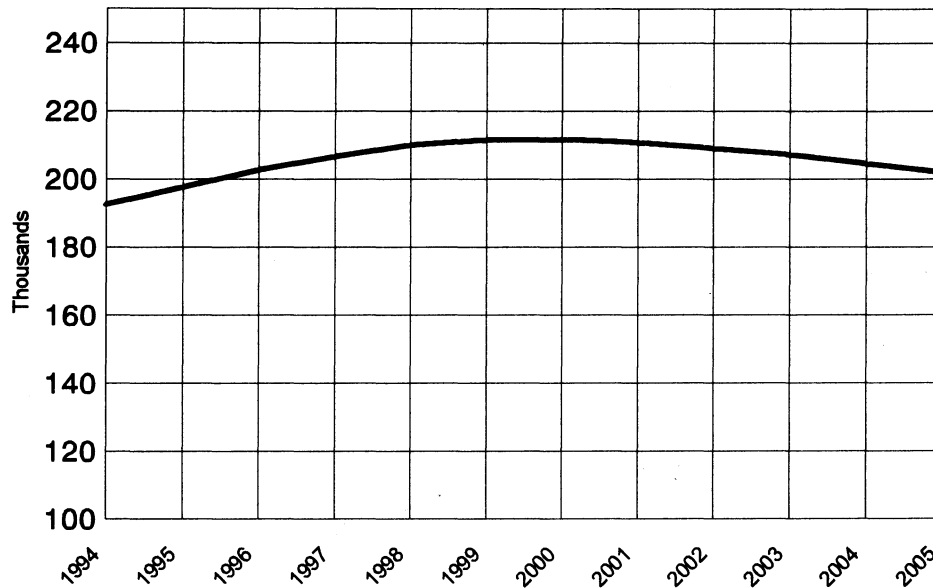
Veteran Benefits Awarded - FY '94

Awards By Region

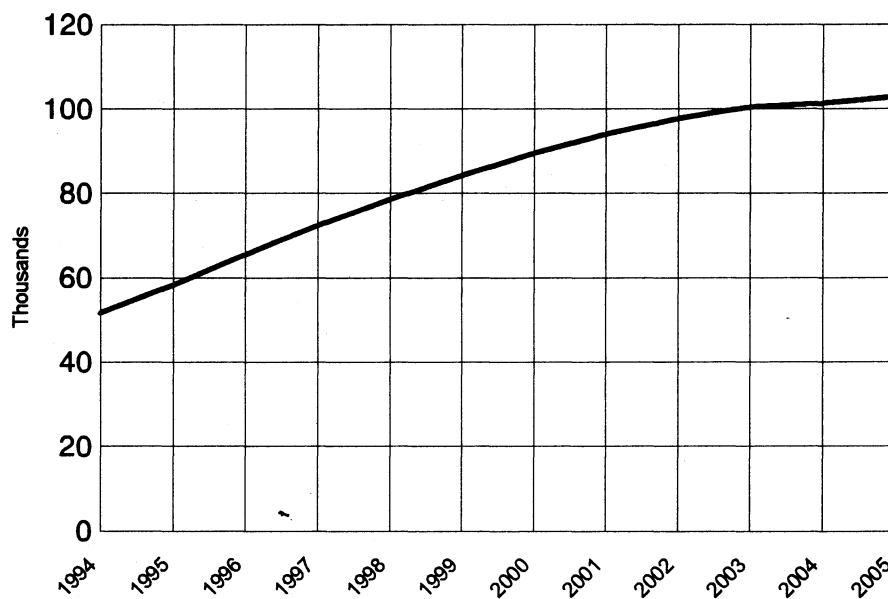


Total Awards - \$51,942,509.92

Missouri Veterans Age 65 and Over



Missouri Veterans Age 75 and Over



Current VA data show 317,000 veterans in Missouri over the age of 55. This is over one half (53.55%) of Missouri's total veteran population of 592,000.



VETERANS HOMES PROGRAM

Any veteran who is in need of nursing care may seek admission to a Veterans Home by filing an application with the Home of his or her choice. Operations funding is accomplished through a combination of state general revenue, federal funding through a Department of Veterans Affairs per diem grant program, and charges to the veteran, based on the individual's ability to pay.

Missouri Veterans Homes are inspected twice annually by the Department of Veterans Affairs for the continuance of per diem payments. Policies for health care administration are centrally managed by the Commission's Executive Director. Therapeutic modalities of physical, psychosocial and rehabilitative origin are provided in each facility.

The five Missouri Veterans Homes are located at St. James, Mount Vernon, Mexico, Cape Girardeau, and St. Louis.

The St. Louis Veterans Home, which began admitting residents on November 1, 1993, will be filled (200 beds) by December 31, 1994. This rapid admission process has temporarily depleted waiting lists.

The St. James Veterans Home has been approved for a federal grant with state matching funds, for construction of 150 replacement beds. Construction will begin early in 1995. The facility plans to celebrate its 100th anniversary in its new facility in 1996.

During FY 1994 (July 1, 1993 - June 30, 1994), Missouri Veterans Homes began experiencing a noticeable lack of availability of applicants for which they could provide adequate care. This is a result of (1) 200 new beds opening in St. Louis, and (2) heavier level of care required. Current staffing levels allow veterans homes to house between 30% and 40% Level III (heaviest) care. One-half of all applicants in FY 1994 required Level III care. The Missouri Veterans Commission is seeking increased staffing this year to attempt to better meet this need for heavy care coverage.

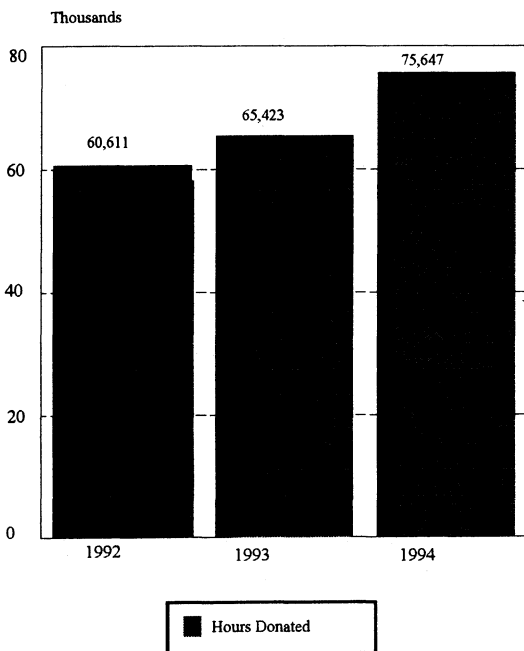
The average age of veterans in Missouri Veterans Homes is 74 1/2 years. Veterans in our Veterans Homes range in age from 39 years to 100 years.



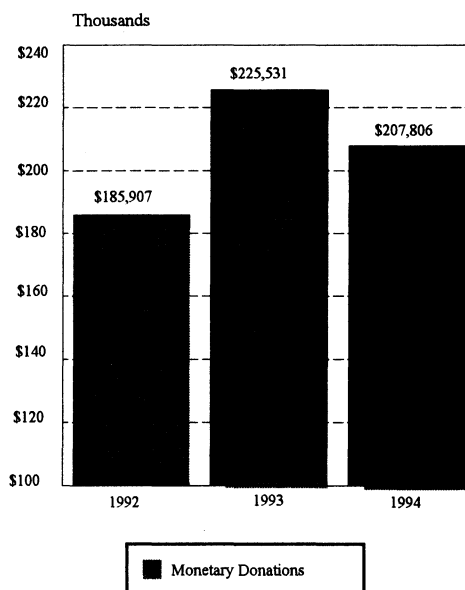
VOLUNTEER DONATIONS

The accompanying charts demonstrate the tremendous support received by Veterans Home residents from groups and individual volunteers. These donations of time, money, and property, are a vital component of each facility's quality management plan. They serve to integrate the facility into the life of the community, thereby greatly enhancing the quality of life for each resident. Each Veterans Home works with a local "Assistance League" to further facilitate its ability to integrate resident lives into community activities.

Volunteer Hours Donated
Comparison of FY 92-93-94



Monetary Donations
Comparison of FY 92-93-94



THE PURPOSE AND VALUE OF ASSISTANCE LEAGUES TO MISSOURI VETERANS HOMES



Introduction

All Missouri Veterans Homes are funded through appropriations by the Missouri General Assembly from two sources of revenue: General Revenue (27%), and Home Fund (37% VA per diem; 36% resident charges). The appropriations are intended to be adequate to provide the necessities for appropriate levels of care. Veterans Homes have established casemixes of patients for which they can provide adequate care with the level of funding provided by the state.

History and Purpose

Veterans Homes, and specifically the residents who reside in Veterans Homes, have always benefited from the broad-based desire of veterans and other community organizations to make donations and to provide volunteer manpower to enhance quality of life for residents of their facilities. In 1973, the administration of the only Veterans Home in the state (St. James) recognized that the potential for improving and enhancing the quality of life for residents was far greater than that which was being realized.

Upon investigation, they soon realized that state bureaucracy was a limiting factor in the amount of volunteer participation at the Veterans Home. If money was donated to the St. James Veterans Home, it could not go directly to the Home. It must be received into a general fund and held there until the state general assembly next met. At that time, the Homes Administrator could request the donated money to be appropriated to the Home for the use for which it was donated, or for any other use. Since the general assembly met only once per year, it could take a full year before the donated money would be appropriated for use; or, it may not even be appropriated. Many, many organizations and individuals were unwilling to wait a year to see their donation put to use, and to indeed risk it being put to an unintended use.

Recognizing the tremendous loss of participation because of the appropriation process requirement, the St. James Veterans Home Superintendent, Mr. Harvey Yocum, and respected members of the St. James community worked together to create the "St. James Veterans Home Assistance League." The Assistance League would accept donations from any source on behalf of the Veterans home, and make the money immediately available to the Veterans Home to be put to the use for which it was intended, or to add to the League's general fund for supplemental funding of extraordinary resident needs. The League organized as a 501C3 organization, thereby enabling donors to make tax-free donations.



Value to Residents

The Assistance League was an instant success. It enabled individuals and organizations to contribute substantially to the quality of resident life. It provided a tax-exempt contribution mechanism for those who wanted it, and it strengthened the bond between the Veterans Home and the community. Donations poured in, and resident quality of life began to significantly increase. The one obvious result of this enterprise was that residents benefited—significantly. Therapeutic equipment, previously only dreamed about, became readily available; transportation to shopping malls and restaurants became available; indigent funds were provided to residents who had no income; Christmas and birthday presents were provided; and community groups the residents had never before seen, made regular visits. A new bond was created, and the Veterans Home reached a new level of community involvement.

The Veterans Home Assistance League had bridged a major barrier to community involvement with the state-operated Veterans Home, but the continued success of this new management technique required vigilance and a focused effort by members of the Assistance League board and the facility Administrator. Areas of responsibility and authority had to be understood and respected. The facility and the community had to cooperate.

Authority and Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the Veterans Home Administrator to oversee all operations of the Home. He/She is responsible for all expenditures of funds on behalf of residents of the facility, and for all activities which affect residents' lives. The Administrator is delegated this authority by the Executive Director of the Missouri Veterans Commission, and the Administrator is responsible to the Executive Director for all actions he/she may take, or not take on behalf of residents.

Assistance Leagues are responsible for insuring that donations received by them are directed to the uses established in their own by-laws. The Missouri Veterans Commission proclaims no authority over Assistance Leagues. The Commission does, however, grant special status to Assistance Leagues because their by-laws establish them for the sole purpose of providing enhanced benefits to residents of Missouri Veterans Homes. The Missouri Veterans Commission expects Assistance Leagues to support its Veterans Home programs, and no other, and to be impartial in their treatment of all donors.

Assistance Leagues have the authority to approve or not approve expenditures as requested by the facility Administrator. They do not have any authority to direct the Administrator in how expenditures are made. The Administrator has a responsibility to provide appropriate input to Assistance Leagues on items, projects, or programs proposed for funding by the Assistance League, and to provide adequate feedback to the Assistance League on the success or failure of items, projects, or programs so funded.

Conclusion



The Missouri Veterans Commission appreciates the tremendous effort put forth by Assistance League boards and Veterans Home Administrators to expand services for residents. We realize that it is often difficult to delineate the appropriateness of certain items or projects for funding through Assistance Leagues. Indeed, the appropriateness of the same purchase may vary from time to time, depending upon availability of state operational funds. Ultimately, almost any needed item or activity could be appropriate for Assistance League funding, if it expands the quality of life for a resident beyond the capability of the operational budget.

Opinions obviously will differ on the appropriateness of budget expenditures, but the ultimate decision regarding all budget expenditures must always rest with the Administrator, because only he/she knows all the ramifications, and he/she must answer for the decisions. The Department of Veterans Affairs, the State Auditor, and the Missouri Veterans Commission require the Administrator to justify all expenditures, including those by the Assistance League.

Assistance Leagues now enhance quality of life for over 700 residents at five Veterans Homes. Without them, community support would be much less, and consequently, resident happiness and satisfaction would be significantly reduced. Assistance Leagues are one of the principal factors which make Missouri Veterans Homes much more than just "another government agency."

MISSOURI VETERANS HOMES

Becky Collett, Administrator,
St. James Veterans Home, 620 N. Jefferson, St. James, MO 65559-1999

Martha Bartlesmeyer, Administrator
Mt. Vernon Veterans Home, 600 N. Main, Mt. Vernon, MO 65712-1098

Robert Bohrer, Administrator
Mexico Veterans Home, 920 Mars, PO Box 473, Mexico, MO 65265-0473

Sam McVay, Administrator
Cape Girardeau Veterans Home, 2400 Veterans Memorial Drive, Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

John Angelle, Jr., Administrator
St. Louis Veterans Home, 10600 Lewis & Clark Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63136



VETERANS TRUST FUND

The Veterans Trust Fund received \$73,173.30 in donations and interest income during FY 1994. The Department of Revenue expended \$7,000.01 from the fund, which is \$2,251.80 over the amount permitted under HB 592, but a considerable improvement over the FY 1993 expenditure of \$38,345.05. (HB 592 limited expenditures by the Department of Revenue to 5% of the previous year's revenues, which were \$94,964.18.) This average is a result of spending that had already occurred prior to the passage of HB 592. FY 1995 appropriations limit administrative expenditures to well below the 5% cap. Governor Carnahan's office has taken an active role in restricting administrative expenditure of Veterans Trust Fund monies.

The Missouri Veterans Commission spent \$31,075.28 on programs for veterans. The Veterans Trust Fund balance on July 1, 1994 was \$264,977.12.

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VETERANS TRUST FUND REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE SUMMARY FY 1994

Beginning Balance		\$229,899.11
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Income

Tax Check-Off	\$63,983.36	
Direct Donations	1,328.00	
Interest Income	7,861.94	73,173.30

Expenses

DEPARTMENT OF REVENUE

Salaries	\$2,018.00	
Benefits	3,773.01	\$ 5,791.01
Rent	1,209.00	(7,000.01)

VETERANS COMMISSION

Travel	\$ 6,121.00	
Printing, Advertising, & Publications	7,930.28	
Phone	592.00	
Postage	950.00	
Supplies	872.00	
Data Processing Software	134.00	
Professional Development	14,476.00	(31,075.28)

Ending Balance	\$264,977.12	
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VETERANS TRUST FUND CONTRIBUTIONS

Individuals and corporations may "check off" on their Missouri tax returns to donate any amount over \$2.00 of their tax refunds to the Veterans Trust Fund, or make a donation by including a separate check with their returns.

The Veterans Trust Fund will greatly improve the availability and quality of services that the Missouri Veterans Commission is able to provide to the state's 592,000 veterans. Contributions are tax deductible.

For more information, or to make a contribution, please call or write:

THE VETERANS TRUST FUND
c/o Missouri Veterans Commission
PO Drawer 147
Jefferson City, MO 65102
(314) 751-3779

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OPERATING BUDGET SYNOPSIS FY 1994

TOTAL COMMISSION APPROPRIATION	\$16,451,955
Governor's Withholdings	-155,117
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Available for Operations	16,296,838
 Program Break Out	
Central Office & Service to Veterans Program	1,502,073
Governor's Withholdings	-38,536
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Available for Operations	1,463,537
 Veterans Homes Program	14,949,882
Governor's Withholdings	-116,581
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Available for Operations	\$14,833,301

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VETERANS HOMES CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS FUND

The 1993 Annual Report of the Missouri Veterans Commission reported the establishment by the General Assembly of the Veterans Homes Capital Improvements Fund. The source of revenue for the new fund would be a 3% excise tax on bingo cards and pull-tabs. The purpose of the fund was to build new Veterans Homes, and keep existing ones in good repair.

In 1994, the 87th General Assembly rescinded the bingo excise tax, and replaced it as a revenue source with unencumbered, non-gaming revenues of the Missouri Gaming Commission. This essentially means that admission fees to riverboats, which are not appropriated by the General Assembly for other purposes, will go to the Veterans Commission Capital Improvements Fund. The basic purpose of the fund was not changed.

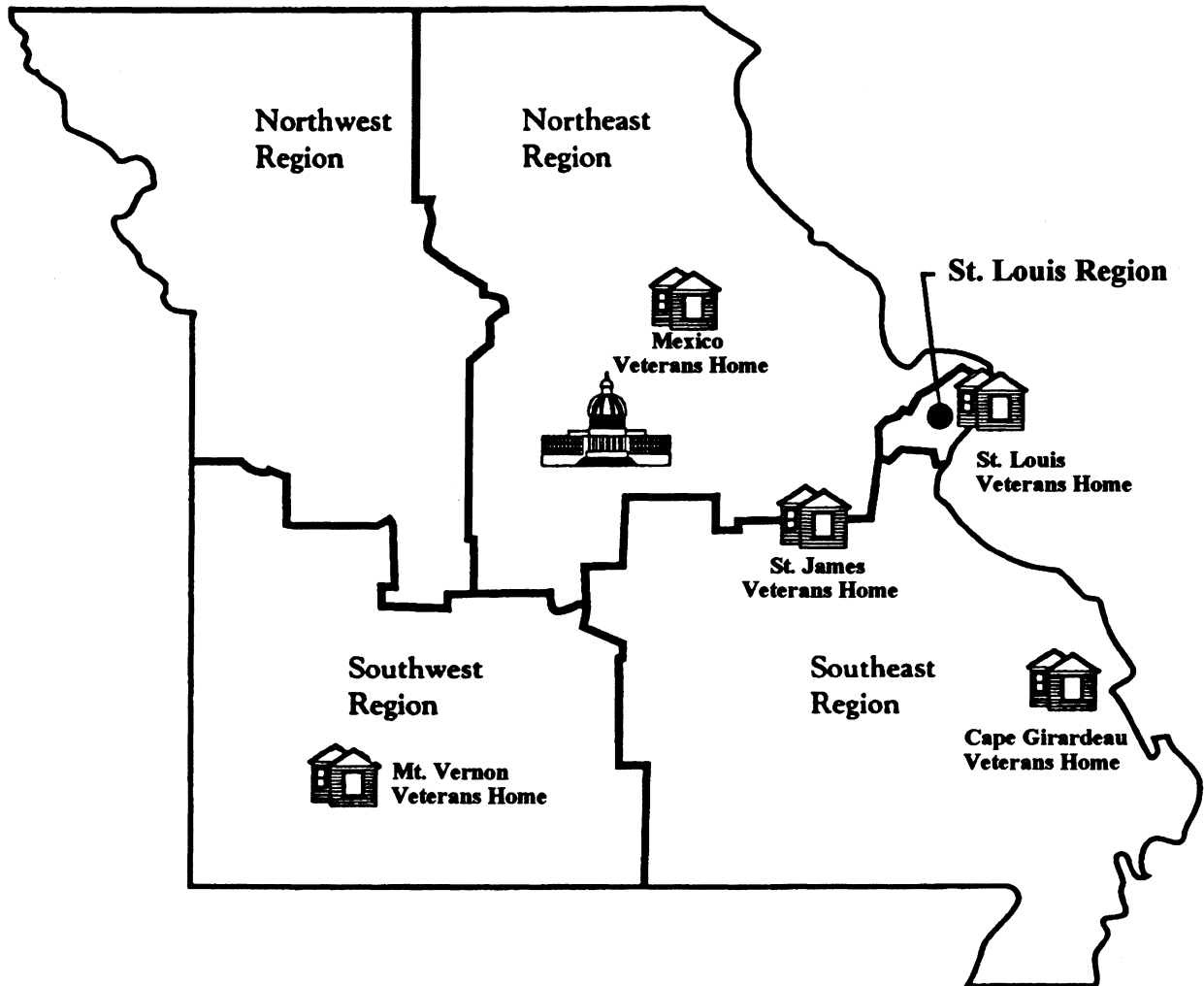
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COMMISSION PROFILE

In Fiscal Year 1994, the Missouri Veterans Commission staffed 770 employees. The Service to Veterans Program was maintained by twenty-eight (28) Veterans Service Officers, five (5) Veterans Service Supervisors, six (6) Veterans Service Assistants, and eleven (11) clerical personnel. These fifty (50) individuals served clients in all 114 counties of Missouri. The Missouri Veterans Homes Program was staffed by 708 employees in a wide range of job classifications. The increase in Homes personnel from 558 in FY 1993 was due to the opening and staffing of the newly constructed Veterans Home in St. Louis. Twelve (12) employees comprised the staff of the Commission's headquarters in Jefferson City.

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MISSOURI VETERANS COMMISSION



Veterans Service Regions & Veterans Home Sites

